Stakeholder's Meeting

January 26, 2005
3:00 p.m.
HTNB Offices

Representatives/Attendees:

BNIM Architects – Steve McDowell
Columbus Park – Amica Gomersall; Mike Sturgeon
Downtown Council/J.E. Dunn – John Yacos
E. Creighton Singleton FAIA, Inc. – Kite Singleton
Forest City Enterprises – John Neely
Greater KC Chamber – Christine Murray
GSA – David Fellers
Guinotte Manor – Martha Allen
Housing Authority – John Monroe
Isle of Capri – Mike Tamburelli; Andrew Goldstone
KCMO City Manager's Office – Wayne Cauthen; Gregory D. Baker
KCMO Council – John Fairfield; Lisa Minardi
KCMO Environmental Management – Ron McLinden
KCMO Parks and Rec – Larry Frevert
KCMO Planning – Steve Noble
KDOT – Rene Hart; Roger Dahlby; Joel Skelly
MARC – Todd Ashby
Missouri River Crossing Committee – Tim Kristl
MoDOT – Joel Blobaum; Kent Johnson; Lee Ann Kell
NKC Levee District – Leon Staab
North KC – Mike Smith
North KC Mayor's Office – Gene Bruns
North KC Office of Economic Development – Jeff Samborski
North KC Police Department – Glenn Ladd
Port Authority – Pat Sterret; Mike Burke
Taliaferro & Browne – Leonard Graham
USACE – Robert Smith

HNTB – Clyde Prem; Jerry Mugg; James Vanwormer; Tom Westerman; Betty Burry; Katie Blakemore; Dan VanPetten; Gretchen Gaines

Other Invitees:

Civic Council of Greater KC
Clay County EDC
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Kansas City EDC
KCATA
KCMO – City Market Oversight Committee
KCMO – Public Works
KCMO – Water Services – East/Levee
Missouri Department of Conservation
Missouri Department of Economic
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
North Kansas City - Parks & Recreation
North Kansas City - Planning & Public Works
North Kansas City Business Council
Northeast Industrial Association
Northland Regional Chamber of Commerce
State Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Senate - Senator Bond's Office

US Coast Guard - 8th District
US Department of Housing and Urban Development
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Fish and Wildlife Service

Meeting Notes

The meeting was called to order at 3:00.

Welcome .....Lee Ann Kell, MoDOT

Lee Ann Kell welcomed the group and thanked them for their time and effort. She noted that that this group is made up of a wide range of stakeholders, from city leaders and public agencies, to businesses and neighborhood representatives. Kell stated that the role of this group is to serve as a sounding board for MoDOT, and to serve as the eyes and ears of the community. Because of the passing of Amendment 3, this project is in the process of being accelerated, and as such, candid input now is critical for the team.

Introductions & Housekeeping .....Betty Burry, HTNB

Betty Burry also welcomed and thanked the group for their time. After noting the location of the refreshments and restrooms, she explained that this meeting is meant to be a forum for discussion and questions relative to the project, provided an overview of the agenda and initiated introductions around the room.

Northland/Downtown MIS Review .....Jerry Mugg, HNTB

Jerry Mugg provided an overview of the federal approval process for large projects, as well as review of the Northland/Downtown MIS process and findings, emphasizing the point that this project – improvements to I-29/I-35 between Missouri 210 and the northwest corner of the downtown loop – is but one component of the MIS recommendations. Other recommendations, including fixed guideway transit and pedestrian/bike movements were also outlined in the MIS, and in particular, transit improvements are part of the ATA's "Smart Moves" plan. He noted that the MIS recommended that both transit and bike/pedestrian accommodations be placed on or near the Heart of America Bridge (Missouri Highway 9) because of, in part, better connections to local street systems both north and south of the river.

Mugg also discussed how the MIS and this project, called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) fit into federal regulations relative to receiving approval from the Federal Highway Administration and how that approval is necessary to receive federal funding for projects, and is also part of the official NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process, as mandated by congress.

Discussion and questions included:

- What about other transit – is it focused on Burlington only?

  Team Response: The MIS preferred strategy is the use of Heart of America Bridge or an adjacent, new bridge for fixed guideway (BRT, buses, light rail). This study is reviewing current data to ensure that conditions have not changed in a way that would alter that recommendation. While the MIS discussed light rail, and the thinking has since shifted to bus rapid transit, the MIS built in flexibility relative to the types transit that require a fixed lane, track, etc., and the same principles apply. BRT is something that the ATA is looking at closely.

- Highway 169 carries so much traffic, why isn't that looked at more closely?

  Team Response: That highway was also a part of the MIS study; in fact the study looked at the three downtown bridges and even crossings further to the east and west in terms of capacity, future growth and how they work together. The MIS found that the I-29/I-35 corridor is a critical link over the Missouri River, and needs improvement.

- Without improvements transit won't be an advantage because you are sitting just as long in your car.

  Team Response: The use of HOV or dedicated bus lanes could be an advantage for transit because they could by-pass much of the traditional traffic on the bridge.

I-29/I-35 EIS Scope, Components & Schedule .....Clyde Prem, HNTB

Clyde Prem reviewed the contents of the EIS now underway, and noted that the study will look at impacts to wetlands, rivers, businesses, homes, historic structures and properties, hazardous waste sites, as well as air and noise quality and how the proposed project affects connectivity in and near the corridor.

Clyde also reviewed the project schedule, noting that the ending place is a ROD or "Record of Decision" from the Federal Highway Administration, which states that the preferred alternative outlined in the document is the project that can move forward.

He also noted that the team started with a wide range of alternatives, and at this point, the team is looking at several "feasible alternatives."

Discussion and questions included:

- Related to whether the bridge is six or eight lanes, there is a big difference in impact. The impact will be also closely related to the capacity (more capacity, more environmental consequences) – How do you decide the number of lanes?

  Team Response: The team is still talking about the number of lanes; in 2030 six would be okay, but eight is better – depending on funding. Eight lanes are "preferred," but the bridge could be built with eight lanes. If only six roadway lanes are built initially, the

bridge could be striped for six, with expansion of the roadway at a later date, when needed. With a river crossing like we have here, you can't go back and make changes in 30 years like you might with a roadway – it is simply not as easy to revisit and add lanes. We have to be prepared well into the future for this magnitude of a bridge – do it right the first time. We are concentrating on the ultimate build – and impacts – which means looking at eight lanes in the document.

It is important to note that the total and partial property acquisitions are virtually the same with both the six and eight lane alternatives. In the north loop, proposed right-of-way is held to its present limits – proposed improvements can be done within those limits.

- If earlier studies say six lanes is adequate, why even think of eight? We should anticipate solutions and situations to stay away from ever having more than six lanes. To have eight lanes builds a public perception that they will have an easy commute. Not saying that people have to live and work on the same side of the river, but we need to show the true cost of this huge, expensive public project. This will encourage people to travel more, and encourage people to live and work further and further out. It will also discourage use of public transit, which we need to encourage.
- We do not want to come back in a few years and have to ask for more funding when we find we need more lanes. Build it the way it should be to begin with – it will alleviate the pollution problem when providing for capacity because cars wouldn't be stopped on the bridge.
- What are the HOV commitments in this corridor? One lane in/one lane out depending on time of day – to ending at 210 doesn't seem right; it needs to hook up with park-n-ride or other systems at least.

  Team Response: HOV could encourage people to car pool. The only advantage of having this one piece alone now is it provides faster bypass if you carpool or take the bus. No, there is no planning for HOV beyond this point in this EIS. Additionally, in the MIS, HOV didn't meet the test in terms of improving the situation by itself. The team will continue to look at the option as part of the EIS and we will continue to look at these studies looking for any change in the information on HOV use in the future.
- Looking at the schedule, where is this meeting noted?

  This series of meetings is not on the official schedule, but is above and beyond what is required for NEPA, and demonstrates MoDOT's desire and willingness to talk with and listen to the community about this very important project.

Alternatives & Possible Impacts Discussion .....All

Jim Van Wormer of HNTB presented an overview of the alternatives under consideration. These include a three point interchange at 210; two options for the Bedford/Levee

interchanges, including (1) a half-diamond with auxiliary lanes to 16th Street and (2) a braided ramp system; three bridge options (1) rehabilitate and reuse existing Paseo and build a companion bridge (2) build two new bridges and (3) build a single structure. Each bridge option has different impacts on nearby properties, as well as related options and impacts to the Front Street interchange. Bridge Option 1 would mean that the Front Street interchange would stay largely as is. Bridge options 2 and 3 would allow reconfiguration of that interchange. The other component related to Front Street is the need to improve the length of lanes for merging and exiting to and from the bridge. If there is a new bridge structure or structures, they would likely need to have an auxiliary lane on both sides to accommodate merges and exits, which would result in essentially 10 lanes over the Missouri River. With bridge options 2 and 3, because of the need to keep the existing bridge open during construction, new construction would likely be located downstream. If a single bridge option is chosen and combined with the braided ramps at Bedford and Levee, businesses north of the Missouri River could be impacted.

Moving to the south, the team has made some adjustments to the ramps connecting with U.S. 24 to provide a buffer to the Columbus Park neighborhood. Several options remain for the north leg of the loop, concluding with a single point interchange at Broadway.

Discussion and questions included:

- Is the downtown Kansas City traffic model going to be used?

  Team Response: Yes.

- Can we get blow-ups of these maps to look into the detail of what we are seeing?

  Team Response: Yes, get in touch with Clyde Prem or Betty Burry at HNTB Corporation (816) 472-1201.

- Single point at Broadway – why? Makes more sense to keep ramp from 169 to I-35S right on – instead of creating that stop & bottleneck

  Team Response: With Alternative A – going south there is an improvement that shows no stop – the ramp follows on into I-35 South; going north, the improvement made is decreasing stops from two to one.

- This goes beyond the MoDOT improvements being done now?

  Team Response: Yes.

- How will the alternatives be decided?

  Team Response: We will list the different alternatives being considered in a matrix and have the environmental consequences listed under each one. We will have that matrix at the next meeting; it will not be fully completed at that point, but we will share the information that we have. MoDOT will weight that information, including community feedback in determining the preferred alternative.

- Will the matrix include opinions/factors from the business owners/residents?

  Team Response: Yes.

- How did we get to 10 lanes?

  Team Response: There are two auxiliary lanes for merging and exiting – one in each direction. If this were a new interchange, not on a bridge, design guidelines would call for ramps would extend to a point nearly half way across the bridge. Adding a portion of a lane is very difficult, if not impossible, on a single large bridge structure.

- The bigger the bridge, the more traffic and more problems to deal with headed into the loop – huge increases in bridge capacity will attract more auto/congestion on both ends – very concerned with attracting more auto traffic.

  Team Response: It's not 10 lanes through the corridor … all of the other bridges will be eight lanes as is most of the rest of the project. The two additional lanes come from the safety and efficiency standard of auxiliary lanes getting traffic on/off safely combined with bridge structure. Lane numbers and configurations will be designed for the best possible through-flow of traffic.

- What is the cost of these auxiliary lanes per cubic foot? $100? $200?

  Team Response: Auxiliary lanes cost the same as regular lanes, so yes, somewhere in that range.

- By creating ease for trucks to enter and exit the highway you encourage trucks to use this new bridge when they already have Choteau which does just fine for their needs.

  Team Response: We are planning on meeting with business leaders in the area to assess their needs.

- New bridge versus rehab bridge – is there a benefit in cost?

  Team Response: We can build two new bridges (basic deck) for about the same amount of money as rehabbing the existing bridge and building a companion, depending on the bridge type. A single structure crossing would likely be more expensive. Additionally, MoDOT will need to consider long-term maintenance costs and issues. Two new structures would likely have the lowest long-term maintenance costs and provide redundancy, should work on one structure be needed. A single, larger bridge can be more difficult and expensive to maintain.

- Concerns about South Riverfront Expressway and the impacts to Front Street's capacity.

  Team Response: Front street would be relocated and then be available for a SRE connection into downtown.

- Question about impacts to Wagoner Industries.

  Team Response: Property could be impacted. If we choose the braided option, it's close to the building; if we choose the single bridge option combined with the braided ramps to Bedford and Levee, then the extreme south-west corner of the building could be affected by the ramp. Parking areas and access could also be affected.

- Concerns about how the whole loop modification is taken into consideration. Need to meet with downtown businesses to discuss.
- Need to consider the Susaki recommendations.
- Is it more difficult to build an all new bridge?

  Team Response: It can be, but could also be simpler because there are fewer staging concerns. There would only one shift of traffic with a single new bridge.

- Parks concerned about the impact to Centennial Boulevard and planned urban renewal (Boulevard runs on Choteau to Front and on to Paseo). Need to be sure this is taken into consideration and that the team and Parks and Recreation work together.

  Team Response: We have met with staff from the Parks Department and are obtaining the plans for the City's relocated Paseo Boulevard so that the transition can be made smoothly and efficiently.

- We need alternatives to capacity improvements. We need to avoid building eight lanes in this corridor. Wants MoDOT to look at solutions avoiding capacity "build." Need to encourage other modes of transportation and force people to consider real costs of their decisions.
- What about using reversible lanes?

  Team Response: Traffic studies show there is a lot of traffic both directions all of the time, and so it's not being looked at for this study.

- I understood this to be different.

  Team Response: Additionally, there are some engineering concerns in creating reversible lanes, especially how to tie them into the system at appropriate points, as well as operational costs and concerns.

- Appreciate changes that improve impacts to Columbus Park, but they don't go far enough. Neighborhood would like team to look at taking emphasizing more of the Paseo connection to continuous frontage roads and not so much on the U.S. 24 connection.
- Don't see the need for additional capacity beyond six lanes; it encourages the wrong behavior, i.e., individual cars traveling longer distances. There is a bias towards

expanding to eight lanes instead of six. You work for an engineering firm, and there aren't many follow-up contracts to design capacity that's found not to be needed.

Team Response: MoDOT is responding to the needs of the community for additional transportation capacity. HNTB is helping MoDOT develop an environmentally and fiscally responsible approach that reflects the vision of the community at large.

- Need the capacity across the Missouri River; North Kansas City is the largest suburb closest to downtown, so in a way, it reduces commutes if it grows versus areas father to the south, east and west.
- Idea for next meeting – break into small groups to discuss specific issues.

Next Steps.....Betty Burry

Betty Burry thanked the group for their time, and said that at the next meeting the group would (1) discuss the bridge options in more depth, (2) provide more detailed information on impacts, via the matrix discussed earlier, and (3) break into small groups (by area of interest/concern) to talk about specific impacts. The next meeting is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. on February 23rd, and the final group meeting on March 30th.